

Farm Labor

"EQUAL RIGHTS FOR

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS"

Published by Citizens for Farm Labor, P. O. Box 1173, Berkeley, California
\$3.00 for twelve issues

Volume I, Number 2. November - December, 1963



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"Equal Rights for Agricultural Workers"

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Cover Photograph: braceros thinning sugar beets near Stockton.
Courtesy: Ernest Lowe, Berkeley.

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EDITORIAL

REQUIEM AETERNAM

At precisely 10:30 A.M., Pacific Standard Time, Friday, November 22, 1963, we were in the midst of an editorial meeting for the second issue of this magazine. We had just decided to reprint a story from that morning's San Francisco Chronicle, concerning an angry blast by a nationally prominent Catholic priest at what he considered a "sellout" by the Administration on a minimum wage for farm workers in Florida. And we had just finished drafting an editorial, tentatively entitled "The Perils of Pablo", which concluded, "Will Mr. Kennedy veto an extension (Of PL 78)? Don't miss the next exciting episode."

Our editorial meeting broke up amid joking and laughter about our having to "tear out the front page" in the event that a veto was, in fact, forthcoming. At that instant, an assassin was fixing in his gunsight the back of the tousled reddish hair...and squeezing the trigger....

Everyone's assumptions were smashed in that instant, to some degree. Ours, in this organization and in this magazine, were smashed to a greater degree than we would have imagined possible, if you had asked us a hypothetical question at 10:29 A.M., November 22. Now that we are able to begin pulling our thoughts together, after six days, we have some inkling of the extent these things were woven into the fabric, impressed into the pillars and rock of our lives: that tousled reddish hair, that characteristic New England voice, that quick grin, the beautiful wife and children, Casals and Pauling at the White House, the cold firm will, the love and instinct for politics.

And we begin to have some inkling of the extent to which we took for granted this liberal President, and took for granted that we would have the right, and privilege, and obligation of continuing to prod him for at least another fourteen months, and almost certainly for another four years beyond that.

We realize, now, that we expected to continue our prodding, not out of a sense of grim duty, but with something akin to enjoyment -- because it seemed worthwhile. Whatever our differences with liberal politicians -- and they are many -- the game was worth the candle. We looked forward to continuing the dialogue with the liberals and their political leaders because, in the end, it held some hope. In the empty years of Eisenhower in Washington and Knight in Sacramento, the effort hardly seemed worthwhile. We are reminded that no citizens' committees for farm labor -- or citizens' committees for anything else in particular -- were formed during those years. Now that events have forced us to look inward upon our unarticulated assumptions, we realize that one of the major missions of Citizens for Farm Labor is to furnish the kind of pressure which is needed to keep liberals faithful to their finest professions.

Suddenly, our images -- the most important ones, that we never took out of storage and examined -- are thrown out of focus. Our warm, secure expectations of a continuing dialogue were predicated upon the known quality, the familiar personality of President Kennedy. Suddenly, there is a new personality in the Presidency. The office makes the man, to an extent, but the man makes the office, too. What is the Johnson style? Who can say? The LBJ Ranch, Texas, is a long way from Boston, Massachusetts.

There is a record of public service, of course, but it could very well be unfair and misleading to predict the career of President Johnson on the basis of the career of Senator Johnson or Vice-President Johnson. The office of President is sui generis; it can hardly fail to change a man. In a sense, everything starts anew from the moment the oath of office is administered.

So we make no predictions. We cannot know how things will now be in the fourteen months ahead, and the four years beyond that. President Johnson will prove himself by his acts in his new office, with respect to agricultural labor as with respect to every other issue on which he must quickly take a decisive stance.

Until then, we can say with certainty only that things are less certain than we thought at 10:30 last Friday morning. We are sobered by the reminder a madman has forced upon us: the fabric of our lives is a fragile web, the pillars and rock impermanent. The stars we must sail by are not human personalities, which are mortal, but human principles, which endure beyond mortality. It is these principles on which we ponder, and for which we are thankful, on this Thanksgiving Day.

To John F. Kennedy, as to Medgar Evers, and the other martyrs there have been and there will be in this imperfect nation and world:

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis, quia puis es.
Amen.

November 28, 1963.

Following is the editorial on which we were working the morning of November 22. In view of the circumstances, the grosser jests and ironies have been altered or removed.

MELODRAMA AND EPIC

The scarlet thread knitting together this issue of Farm Labor is Politics. Some knowledgeable people in the farm labor movement have become convinced the only solutions are political solutions: for example, that it is futile to continue trying to organize farm workers until they are covered by collective bargaining laws. Other knowledgeable people in the farm labor movement have, over the years, become totally disillusioned by politics: they are convinced, for example, that it is futile to spend any more time trying to get farmworkers covered by collective bargaining laws until they are already organized.

Everyone in the movement, we take it, would agree on this much: you can't ignore politics. Whether or not you choose to labor in this particular vineyard, it is There. Even those who believe politics can do them no good must admit it can do them harm. Surely there is no one in the farm labor movement who does not agree that Public Law 78 has had an effect, almost beyond calculation, on agricultural workers, and that this effect has been, in the euphemistic language of the law itself, "adverse".

If it were possible for us to stand back from the situation, and regard it without passion, the career of Public Law 78, this year, would look like an improbable melodrama from the hand of some unusually imaginative scenario writer.

March 29: Committee hearings on extension. The faithful testify for the sixth time since 1951.

May 29: In a stunning reversal, the House rejects the recommendations of its Agriculture Committee, and votes not to extend P.L. 78.

July 31: After a series of cliff-hanging tie votes, the Senate extends an amended version of the bracero system.

October 31: The House reverses itself again, and votes for extension without amendment.

What will the Senate do now? And if a bill reaches his desk, what will the President do? Would he veto a bill which didn't contain the amendments requested by his own Department of Labor? We must put aside our clouded crystal ball. Events are moving too fast. Anything we might say today could well be rendered obsolete tomorrow by the swift pen of current history. We can do no more than comment on the broader aspects of events which have already receded into the relative solidity of things past. And, even here, we are still very close to the trees, and it is difficult to discern the forest.

Some day, graduate students in sociology, political science, history, and economics will write master's and doctoral theses on the bracero system -- America's mid-Twentieth Century flirtation with indentured servitude. It is a panoramic, almost epic subject, laying bare the essences of our society. It reveals us, as a people, at our avaricious worst. It reveals that most of us are simply complacent, and indifferent to anything which does not impinge on us directly. And, at the same time, it reveals that there are some quarters of our society which are still prepared to struggle to keep us faithful to the genius of democracy. Somehow or other, in the long run, the conscientious minority seems to prevail. The movement to abolish chattel slavery ultimately prevailed. The women's suffrage movement prevailed, after fifty years or more. The child labor movement prevailed. The industrial union movement prevailed. The movement to abolish the bracero system -- and, beyond that, to rectify the underlying conditions which have made such a system possible -- this movement, too, will ultimately prevail. We shall overcome.

But, in the meantime, probably not one American in ten thousand is aware of the significance of the farm labor struggle -- aware that this, like the civil rights movement with which it has so much in common, is in truth a struggle for America itself. Scholars, a generation from now, will, in their scholarly way, recognize the farm labor movement as one of the most important groundswells of our time. But, for the moment, partisans of the movement must content themselves with the only reward reformers ever get in their own time: the joy of doing justice and loving mercy. It is sufficient.

REPORT TO THE SUBSCRIBER

The response to our first issue was -- how shall we say it -- somewhere approximately on the 50 yard line between restrained and overwhelming. We sent out about 350 copies of the magazine. One lesson we learned, after a week or two of waiting and wondering, was that delivery of 3rd class mail is a good deal slower than we had imagined. But then replies started to come in, and we were able to pay our bills, and could see our way ahead to the second issue, and the third, and the fourth....

At this writing, mail is still coming in. At the risk of omitting someone who may miss our publication deadline, our Advisory Board presently includes: Herman Gallegos, former National President of the Community Service Organization; Paul Jacobs, staff writer of the Reporter, author of State of the Unions, and director of the Trade Union Project of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions; Professor Joseph Tussman, Department of Philosophy, University of California, Berkeley; Professor Seymour Lipset, Director, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley; Professor Joseph Fontenrose, chairman, Classics Department, University of California, Berkeley; Professor Van Dusen Kennedy, School of Business Administration, University of California, Berkeley. And, Dr. Milton I. Roemer, School of Public Health, University of California at Los Angeles; Dr. Jack Little, Institute of Social and Personal Relations; Dr. Paul F. O'Rourke, California Department of Public Health; Attorney James Murray, former executive secretary of California Citizens Committee for Farm Labor; Attorney Mal Burnstein, CORE and Boatrockers Democratic Club; Joan London, former staff member of California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO; George Ballis, editor of Valley Labor Citizen; Nancy Swadesh, California Democratic Council leader; Alfred Song, Assemblyman from Monterey Park; Anne Draper, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America; Andres Arellano, Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee. Also, Mr. and Mrs. William Kauffman, Bay Area leaders of the Catholic Worker Movement; Fred Van Dyke, National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor; Robert Pickus, National Executive Secretary of Turn Toward Peace; Walter Packard, international authority on water distribution and land tenure; Max and Atara Mont, Emergency Committee to Aid Farm Workers; Joe Gunterman, Friends Committee on Legislation and Emma Gunterman, Gridley Child Care Center; Bard McAllister, Tulare County farm labor project, American Friends Service Committee. And, Rev. Dr. Harold Wilson, Presbyterian Church, Sacramento; Rev. Aron Gilmartin, Diablo Valley Unitarian Church; Rev. Richard Byfield, Palo Alto; Rev. Chris Hartmire, Director, California Migrant Ministry; Father Thomas McCullough; Katy Peake; Norman Thomas; Cesar Chavez, Farm Workers Association. (organizations listed for identification purposes only).

We have received many letters -- most of them encouraging. Extracts from some of them will be found in "Letters to the Editors", this issue. A number of people responded with offers of articles for future issues of the magazine. And a number responded with contributions substantially in excess of the usual subscription price. We have tried to thank these friends individually, and take this opportunity

to thank them publicly and as a group. We could not continue the type of operation we envisage without such help, for we are sending Farm Labor to an extensive "free list" of libraries and other institutions. The subscription price of \$3.00 for twelve issues scarcely covers the cost of materials and postage, with nothing left over to spread our particular gospel beyond the original apostles.

We noted in our first issue, and we shall note again and again, that Citizens for Farm Labor does more than produce this magazine. In recent weeks, CFL's Legal Committee, under the direction of Attorneys Howard Richards and Arthur Brunwasser, has begun research and planning, pointing toward some fundamental and far-reaching legal action on behalf of agricultural workers. (See Brunwasser's article in next issue.)

CFL now has a Public Relations Committee, led by Max Awner, former editor of labor publications, including Advance, newspaper of Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. And we have a Political Action Committee, with Bob Mang, of Friends Committee on Legislation, serving as coordinator. We repeat what we said in our prospectus: there is something useful for you to do, no matter what your tastes, talents, and time. Our brows are not Zeus-like. We never expected a program to emerge full-blown. CFL's future activities will be shaped by the number of persons who choose to help, and what they conceive to be important.

General meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month, at 1615 Bonita Street, Berkeley. We look forward to seeing you.

* * * * *

There seems to be some doubt in some people's minds as to whether Farm Labor is a monthly publication. Our goal was and is to issue it as close to the first of the month as we can. We are close to that goal in this second issue. But we are sending it by third class mail, and third class mail does not move swiftly during the Christmas season. If this issue does not reach you until after the holidays, please bear with us.

And if the pressures of this season prevent our completing the third issue by January 1, please bear with us, too. You will find, in last month's prospectus, that the terms of our subscriptions were "\$3.00 for 12 issues," not "\$3.00 per year." If some issues are bimonthly (as is the present one, in effect), and if it takes us a year and a quarter to deliver your twelve issues to you, we will have upheld our end of the bargain.

Now, as for your end... In the cover letter of our last issue, with its check list of things you might do to help us, we neglected to mention one of the most important things. Please send us the names and addresses of other people you believe would have a pronounced interest in Citizens for Farm Labor and/or this magazine. Even better, why not use this holiday season to send us gift subscriptions in their names?

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

H.P.A.
H.R.
W.G.

Several Conferences, primarily or peripherally concerned with farm workers have been held in the last month:

Early in November, the annual convention of MAPA (Mexican-American Political Association) was held in Los Angeles. This is a rapidly growing organization, particularly in southern California, which is oriented toward the importance and need for registering voters, discussing issues, and asserting influence on the part of young Mexican-American leaders. The convention was, in the words of one participant, "spirited", "marked by a lively exchange of views and by parliamentary debate on a sophisticated level". Vigorous opposition to the bracero program was voted, without a single dissention.

Neil Morgan, writing in the Chronicle, Nov. 23, reports on a conference held the following week: dateline-Los Angeles. "The Negro revolution of 1963 has not aroused the enthusiasm of the 4,000,000 Mexican-Americans of the southwest, through fear that gains for Negroes are being made at the expense of the Mexican-Americans. This was the mood of the recent five state Conference here sponsored by the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. ... Mexican-Americans rose and observed coolly that Mexicans had been in California for two centuries without making much headway in their fight for equality." Morgan continues: "In southern California, the Mexican-American is not a target of prejudice. He is in a kind of limbo; neither accepted or rejected. He is a vague part of the misty legend of early California, a residue of the caballero, and the vaquero, and he is not in anybody's way"

On Nov. 23-24, the National Students Association held a student conference at Redlands University to discuss the farm labor issue in the southwest and to determine a viable summer project for college students from the area. Sixty students heard Senator O'Sullivan, Max Mont of the Emergency Committee, Norman Smith, a local citrus grower, a State Health Department representative, Rev. Chris Hartmire, and Peter Lauwerys (Emergency Committee) speak to the subject. Later, the students spoke of activities they had carried out: four students from Chico State described the Gridley summer school project; another spoke of her summer with Migrant Ministry; a third chronicled the Stanford YWCA workcamp and follow-up weekend projects carried on in North Tracy last spring; a fourth, Stanford undergraduate, who spent last summer as a fruit tramp gave the "inside story" on life in the Linnell camp. Plans to appeal for college credits in Education earned through practice-teaching in summer school programs for migratory workers' children, which are now given by Chico State, were laid by students from several other state colleges; more definite plans for a student summer program were also laid. The mood of this conference was most constructive; students from the state's agricultural colleges sobered the social science majors from other schools; discussion was lively; constructive plans were laid.

Forthcoming: The Fourth Annual Conference on Families Who Follow the Crops, to be held February 27-28 at the Bakersfield Inn. Sponsored by the Governor's Committee on Children and Youth, this conference becomes more impressive each year. For information, write Mrs. Florence Wyckoff, 243 Corralitos Road, Watsonville.

A reminder: for those of our subscribers who live within range of KPFA, Henry Anderson, co-editor of Farm Labor, presents his views on farm labor issues on this station from 7-7:15 one Friday evening each month. For the others, these broadcasts are reproduced in the magazine each month.

A SYMPOSIUM ON THE REVIVAL OF PUBLIC LAW 78

After the House of Representatives revived the bracero system, on October 31, we wrote to a number of observers, asking them, "What happened?" Father Vizzard is Washington representative of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. Ed Roybal represents California's 30th District; James Roosevelt, the 26th; Henry Gonzalez, the 20th District of Texas. Our fifth contribution was broadcast as one of our co-editor's regular commentaries over Station KPFA.

NO EASY VICTORIES

Rev. James Vizzard, S.J.

For many years one of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference's most urgent goals has been justice and decency for migratory farm workers. These poorest of America's poor, with an average income of less than \$1,000 a year, have no influence or voice of their own. Unless a concerned party such as the Conference speaks and battles on their behalf they would have little or no hope ever to achieve anything approaching an American standard of work and life.

We are not happy, therefore, to have to report that the Conference's campaign recently suffered a legislative setback.

On Thursday, October 31, in a Halloween trick to migrants and treat to employers, the House of Representatives reversed its previous refusal to extend the Mexican farm labor program. Earlier this year, on May 29, by a vote of 174 to 158, the House had ordered a halt to this program which for a decade had been bringing hundreds of thousands of Mexican citizens into this country as a kind of slave labor force to do harvest and other work in our fields. By that vote the House had indicated that the less than 50,000 farm operators who used Mexican braceros should start acting like any other American enterprise by offering jobs at American standards of wages and working conditions to United States migrant workers who so desperately need those jobs and income.

That May 29 victory, considered one of the most surprising legislative upsets in recent years, was rightly credited to the efforts of organized labor and the church groups led by the Conference. But even at that time we warned that the successful battle would not be the end of the war. How right that prediction was!

Bracero users and their powerful associates, such as the canning and processing industries, and in particular the American Farm Bureau Federation, immediately swung into a massive lobbying campaign, the likes of which Washington has rarely seen. During the floor debate on the bill, Representative John Fogarty of Rhode Island went so far as to state: "In the twenty-three years I have been a member of this Congress I have never been lobbied by so many high-handed, brazen lobbyists as I have in the last three or four weeks in behalf of the extension of Public Law 78 (the bracero program)."

On the day of the vote the WASHINGTON POST carried an article on this intensive lobbying which, among other things, stated, "One congressman told that a big soup company would not build a new plant it was planning in his district if the bracero bill were defeated." That's what's known here as tough lobbying.

In the meantime, of course, the Conference and its allies intensified our efforts to nail down the May 29 victory. Literally thousands of letters, telegrams and phone calls were directed to congressmen by those who like us insisted on the moral as well as the social and economic evils of the bracero program. At its annual meeting at Grand Forks, North Dakota, on October 8, the Conference adopted a policy statement again condemning this program which has "exploited the extreme poverty of Mexico in such a way as to place additional heavy burdens of unemployment and depressed wages on . . . the migrant farm workers." A personal letter was sent to every congressman calling this statement to his attention and emphasizing that the program "has been roundly and repeatedly condemned by every responsible spokesman for organized religion."

But the forces for reform were not strong enough to counteract the power of dollars and votes which the opponents wielded so ruthlessly. So on October 31, by a cliff-hanging vote of 173 to 158, the House reinstated the bracero program for one more year. As THE NEW YORK TIMES editorialized, "Once again the corporate farm interests in California, Texas and Arizona are on their way to using Congress as an instrument for depressing the wages and working conditions of America's most exploited workers."

Since the Senate had previously passed a somewhat different bill, the House bill will be resubmitted for Senate consideration. If approved there, the bill then goes to the President for his signature. At both of these final stages of the legislative process the Conference will continue battle, but the chances of victory are not good.

Are we discouraged? No. We realize that there are no easy victories in this struggle for justice.

Moreover, having lost the October 31 battle, we could well have won the war. Even the victorious side concedes that it cannot successfully face another such battle. During the floor debate spokesman after spokesman flatly stated that this was the last time he would vote for an extension of the bracero program. If these pledges are honored, and if the Conference's extensive efforts are continued - as they will be - the chances are that what the WASHINGTON POST called a "perpetuation of peonage" next year will be finally ended.

"Mr. Chairman, I do not think (the bracero program) is immoral or anything we have to be ashamed of in any way, shape, or form. It means that we have two different kinds of (workers): agricultural workers and industrial workers in the United States."

Robert Leggett (Dem., Calif.), Congressional Record, Oct. 31, 1963.

".. A SAD COMMENTARY ON OUR AMERICAN SENSE OF VALUES...."

Hon. Edward R. Roybal, M. C.

Last week's relatively close 173 to 158 House vote extending the Mexican Farm Labor Program (for the sixth time in a row since it was started in 1951 as a 'temporary, war-time program') will have the unfortunate effect of perpetuating this huge, federally-subsidized system of importing foreign labor to compete with U.S. domestic farm workers at a time when nearly 5 million Americans are without jobs.

There are indications, however, that this may be the last time Congress extends Public Law 78, as many members of the House stated during debate that they were voting in favor of the simple one-year extension only to give large users of bracero labor a chance to adjust to the end of the program.

The bill now goes back to the Senate, which in August approved a similar one-year extension, but with an important amendment providing that Mexican nationals could not be recruited unless American growers first made a bonafide effort to attract domestic workers for the available jobs at wages and hours and with workmen's compensation, housing, transportation, and work period guarantees equal to those offered braceros.

Since the House defeated the original two-year extension in May by an almost identical 174 to 158 vote, there is some doubt that a compromise can be agreed on with the Senate. Proponents, however, say they have the votes to push it through.

For the last 12 years the Bracero Program has brought in 200,000 to 400,000 foreign agricultural workers annually to work during harvest time on American cotton, sugar beet, fruit and vegetable farms located primarily in the states of California, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, Arkansas and Michigan --- while national unemployment ranged between 5 and 7 per cent of the labor force, and unemployment among U.S. migratory farm workers averaged twice the national figure!

In effect, the Bracero Program has been a multi-million dollar imported labor subsidy going to less than 1% of America's growers of food and fiber -- generally operating large, profitable, corporation-type farms -- at the expense of our lowest paid and most underprivileged citizens. Here in California, where nearly two-thirds of the braceros work, only 7% of the state's largest operators utilize their services. The rest -- usually the smaller, family-type farms -- employ domestic field workers or harvest their crops mechanically.

Historically, the Bracero Program fits into California agriculture's 90 year pattern of dependence on cheap imported foreign labor to work in the fields. First it was the Chinese, then the Japanese, then the Europeans -- Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Russians, German-Russians, and Armenians -- then the so-called "Okies" and "Arkies" of the Depression Years. Now it is the Mexican national.

In my opinion, California agriculture, and agriculture in other parts of the country as well, has lived long past the day when it should be leaning on the crutch of a foreign labor subsidy at the expense of hundreds of thousands of fellow Americans.

It strikes me as somewhat of a paradox that the Bracero Program is supported by the nation's large commercial farming interests -- the supposed embodiment of the rugged, individualistic, free enterprise system in American -- while the Bracero Program, itself, represents the very antithesis of that system. For under it, if U.S. workers are not available at the grower's wage, he simply turns to the Federal Government in Washington to set up and operate a human subsidy system to assure a constant supply of imported labor for his peak seasons of demand. Certainly an effective method of getting around the realities of the free market economy, and bringing the normal laws of supply and demand under artificial control -- regrettably to the detriment of the human "commodities" involved.

Moreover, it is ironic that, whereas the United States has always maintained a variety of tariffs on industrial and agricultural products throughout its history -- to protect domestic industry and farmers from 'unfair foreign competition' -- in the case of American farm workers, our human products so to speak, we not only do not have anything like a tariff to protect them, but, on the contrary, we open up the doors and bring in hundreds of thousands of foreign competitors every year, driving wages down below subsistence levels, and taking even those underpaid jobs away from the domestic employee.

This situation is indeed a sad commentary on our American sense of values, when we rate the protection of prices on our industrial and farm products above the protection of our fellow citizens in their jobs and in their livelihood.

I am confident that when Public Law 78 is finally terminated, and a systematic program of recruitment, transportation, and work contracts, similar to what has been offered Mexican nationals for the past 12 years, is provided for domestic migrant workers, our American growers will have no difficulty whatsoever in hiring more than enough reliable field hands at harvest time.

And when U.S. farm workers are assured decent wages, hours, and working conditions, and such long-overdue protections as unemployment and workmen's compensation, as well as more adequate housing facilities, then America's "Harvest of Shame" will be a thing of the past, and a longstanding blot on our national conscience will have been removed.

THE LAST EXTENSION

Hon. James Roosevelt, M. C.

I do not believe (the extension of P.L. 78) was a question of the presence or absence of the "right" or "wrong" people... Nor do I believe lobbyists were particularly influential, and so far as I know, there was no vote trading.

It is my sincere belief that, as was stated by Mr. Sisk and others, enough members felt a flat, definite "no" had not been given to agricultural interests, and that the House vote (of May 29) in itself could not be taken as such notice in view of the Senate action (of July 31). It was also felt full responsibility had not been exercised by the Department of Labor...

I endeavored to secure acceptance of what I considered a most reasonable amendment which would have expressed the sense of the Congress that this would be the last extension. When it was refused, I voted against the extension, and I believe there are enough committed votes to defeat a similar move next year.

As to (the future)...I do believe a lot will depend upon how much effort is made by the Department of Labor to impress the growers that there is an American labor force.

A SHAMEFUL TESTIMONIAL TO HUMAN AVARICE AND CALLOUSNESS....

Hon. Henry B. Gonzalez, M.C.

I have fought against the extension of the Public Law 78, known as the Bracero Bill.

This is a law whose history, from its inception, is a sordid one, indeed. It has been and is a shameful testimonial to human avarice and callousness. It has been dogged by graft, kickbacks, (or "mordidas") and the rat-holing of a pitiful mass of humanity, ignorant in dire need, and used callously by people who should know better. It has used the misery of a people in one country to further depress the misery of a people in another country.

The ones who yell and mouth the loudest about how badly they need this "cheapest of the cheap" labor are the very ones who tell us that the native American of Mexican descent is handicapped because of his "cultural handicaps", such as language and that this is the main reason for his lack of progress. Yet, they clamor for the Bracero labor, and see no inconsistency in the fact that the Bracero cannot speak English and in most instances is illiterate. So, the truth is, that these individuals really mean that language handicaps, illiteracy, etc., are no handicaps, provided the laborer is so docile and so ignorant he "can't talk back" and knows his place of "proper servility".

Yes, these same persons and groups clamoring for the importation of cheap labor are the ones who are the most ferocious against the "meddling" of the Federal government, the spending of monies. They are the perennial champions of States Rights: they cry out against what they call the mollicoddling of the Federal government -- yet these same jackdaws of "independence" and "self-reliance" abjectly admit they must have the Federal government continue to subsidize imported slave labor to the tune of one and a half million dollars a year.

Less than one and one half per cent of the farms of America use Bracero Labor, albeit this minority, in the norm of emergency, expects and demands the 98% of the "yahoos", to foot the bill for the subsidization of their labor program.

They want to bring this labor under this type of law because this is the only way they can get it manacled, handcuffed and bound by a resurrection of the indenture system of the last century. They want this labor, male, able-bodied and not restricted by wife, family, or relatives, to be used for a specific purpose, for a specific period of time and then, when used, like a mule or beast of burden, shunted back to where it was procured.

They don't want this labor to come over in dignity, with freedom and bargaining rights - or to, like our forebearers, walk freely in the land seeking their destiny.

No, the procurer of this coolie labor doesn't want him over as a legal resident because he knows that once the worker comes in freedom he will not remain to work for him under the conditions of the Bracero indenture. Ask any American consul in Mexico who has had experience with this and see if he will not corroborate this fact. Get the statistics on how many Texas ranchers use braceros and then find out how many of these ranchers are able to keep braceros, who become citizens. Yes, human being, no matter how much debased and abused, have the divine mark of freedom engraved in their minds and souls and even yearn for it. Even a dog can tell the difference between being kicked and stumbled over.

Given the never-never logic of the bracero system, the following letter may have been taken seriously by some bracero-users. It was read into the Congressional Record during the Oct. 31 debate by Congressman Ben Rosenthal of New York.

Dear Congressman Rosenthal:

...we are unanimously in favor of the bracero program and its extension.... We are an association of ladies' high-style dress manufacturers, each of us having over 500 sewing machine operators in our employ. We are businessmen -- first, last, and always, and are sympathetic to the cause of our California fellow businessmen.

...we want you to not only support the bill, but to offer an amendment... The amendment provides that when the 200,000 braceros come into the United States for farm work, their 200,000 wives or girl friends are transported to New York City to work as sewing machine operators for member-employers of our association. This proposal may initially shock you, but let me explain:

1. There is a terrible shortage of sewing machine operators who will work at a dollar an hour. We are now forced to pay \$2.25 an hour. If we can get these braceros, we can replace the \$2.25 an hour workers with the dollar an hour workers. In this way, we can overcome the competition from Philadelphia and Chicago. Naturally, they can get welfare assistance and in this way all the taxpayers will be supporting them, not just the members of our association.

2. Our work is seasonal in the high-style dress industry. After we copy Dior's Paris designs, we have only 6 to 8 weeks to reap the harvest, and to get our dresses into the stores. ...last year, I was stuck with 1500 dresses that were too high above the knee. Can you imagine getting caught like that? Under the Rosenthal amendment ... we would have an abundance of seasonal labor.

3. As far as housing is concerned, we have made tentative arrangements to put the 200,000 ladies in dormitory housing on unoccupied Ellis Island which is in the middle of New York Harbor. In their off hours, they will be within view of the Statue of Liberty. This should provide them with considerable appreciation of the American Heritage.

To prevent any unfortunate incidents concerning the fact that we will have 200,000 unmanned females on the island, we have purchased two surplus PT boats, which will make continuous inspection tours around the island.

... As far as the Mexican Government is concerned, just say it is good for their economy, and a pain-free method of foreign aid. Forget about the fact that it will be the American workers who lose their jobs who will have to pay for this foreign aid.

As for the church groups complaining that the children who remain home in Mexico are left there without a father or mother, be prepared to accept a substitute which may provide for funds to send psychiatrists to the children. ... If the churchmen push the question of the problem of the natural yearnings of the female island residents, remind them of the PT boats and, if necessary, accept a substitute whereby we will be responsible for the construction of a Cyclone Fence around the island. Don't agree to anything beyond the fence, because if the program becomes too costly, it loses the financial advantages that we envision.

Good luck. We remain

Yours for a free economy,
Times Square Dress Manufacturers Ass'n.
Joe Doakes, President.

THE LIBERALS WILL GET YOU IF YOU DON'T WATCH OUT

Henry Anderson

I don't know how you spent Halloween, but I was badly frightened. Not by witches and phantoms -- of the usual sort -- but by the specter of liberalism. It's not the "gobaluns", it seems, it's the liberals will get you if you don't watch out.

On October 31--Halloween -- by a vote of 173-158, the U.S. House of Representatives brought back to life the cadaver of the bracero system. I shivered that night. For this is an evil system. It puts the U.S. government into the business of importing peons from an impoverished foreign country; it blasts the lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans who must compete with this captive labor; it drives small farmers from the land; it breaks up families in rural Mexico; it makes a mockery of all our preening and pretensions as leaders of the so-called free world.

Of the 173 votes in favor of renewing the bracero system, 95 were cast by Republicans, 65 by Southern Democrats, 13 by Northern Democrats. I am not going to dwell on the massive Republican support for this slave labor law. All of California's 15 Republican Congressmen voted for it. One is always disgusted over such conduct by the party which prates about individualism and freedom -- but one is no longer surprised. Nor is one surprised that Southern Democrats, unabashed carriers of the slaveholding tradition, should go right down the line with the bracero system. Rather, I am going to talk about those 13 votes by Northern Democrats. They strike me as much more interesting.

Whose were these unlucky 13 votes? Well, there was a liberal from Colorado (Aspinall); a liberal from Oregon (Duncan); a liberal from New Mexico (Morris); and a liberal from Arizona (Udall). All the rest -- all nine of them -- were Democrats from California. These nine, alone, were the swing votes. If they had gone the other way, the bracero system would have died the death it so deserves. Here is the dishonor roll: Johnson, Moss, Leggett, McFall, Sisk, Hagen, Sheppard, Hanna, and Van Deerlin. In addition, four liberal Democrats from California for one reason or another did not vote at all on the bracero issue: Shelley, Miller, Cameron, and George Brown. And, in a truly amazing move, Congressman James Roosevelt proposed a compromise which would have made Mexican contract workers available next year to bracero-holders who had used them at any time in the past. In other words, sustain the free society by limiting slavery to the areas it has already corrupted. Shades of 1850. The Roosevelt amendment was eventually defeated by those who didn't want to limit slavery even to this extent, and Roosevelt voted against the unamended bill, but the moral damage had already been worked by Roosevelt's willingness to compromise.

Now, I suppose I should give credit to the 10 of the 23 California Democrats who voted against the bracero bill, and two -- Cohelan and Roybal -- who spoke against it on the floor. But, really, what is so special about what they did? In heaven's name, can't we take for granted that every liberal will speak and vote against every form of slavery every chance he gets? I regret to say we cannot. Our Democratic delegation was split squarely down the middle: four did not vote; ten voted against the bracero system; nine voted for it. It seems to me that Californians of the Democratic persuasion bear a heavy burden now. It was the votes of liberal Democrats from the liberal state of California which grafted slave labor onto our body politic for at least another year. This caused me to tremble for the prospects of our whole liberal political process, on the night of October 31.

A speech by Congressman Roosevelt, which appears on page 19676 of the October 31 Congressional Record will serve as the springboard for the rest of my remarks. Roosevelt said,

...there seem to be three groups who have discussed this bill... One...is a group which makes it very clear they think the law itself is necessary and should go on more or less in perpetuity... (Another) consists of people who say they [i.e., bracero-users. ED.] have had enough time and enough notice and, therefore, the law should be completely stopped now. Mr. Chairman, I belong in the middle group, the group who believes that the law needs to be phased out because people will be hurt unless a reasonable time is allowed to make the necessary adjustment...

My friends, I think you will agree that in general I can be classified as a liberal... I happen to think that a liberal is one who supports a principle but that he does not trample on somebody... I think I can be for the principle and still be fair to some people [i.e., bracero-users] who otherwise would get hurt.

Time doesn't permit ^{me} to comment as I would like on the substance of this and the other liberal Democrats' appeals for sweet reasonableness. I cannot comment on the twelve and a half years which bracero-holders have already had to "phase out" their "emergency" program. I cannot comment on the ruthless trampling and hurt which bracero-holders have visited upon great numbers of innocent people during those twelve and a half years. I shall comment only upon what is between the lines of the Roosevelt speech. These are the things which frightened me on Halloween.

Roosevelt implies, with unusual clarity and candor, that a liberal instinctively searches for a "middle group", and if none exists in nature, he creates an artificial one, even if this means moderates have to be pushed to one side and classified as "extremists." A liberal, Roosevelt tells us, wants to be fair to everybody, including exploiters and oppressors. A liberal wants to be "reasonable". He doesn't want to "hurt somebody."

Perhaps this sounds good, but the trouble is, it just cannot be done -- unless you can visualize a society in which nothing ever changes, and unless you can accept this as an ideal society. I can do neither. Societies have to change, or else die. And social change always seems unreasonable to somebody. It always seems hurtful to somebody. To compromise, to twist and turn in the search for painless solutions, only postpones the day of hard reckoning. If anything is ever to be done, someone eventually has to take a firm stance and say, with Kierkegaard, "either...or." Somebody has to say, without wavering, "We can't have it both ways." Somebody has to say, "Liberation for farm workers is more important than the wallets of bracero-users -- and consumers." Or, "Liberation for Negroes is more important than the racial hallucinations of Caucasians and the seniority system in Congress." Or, "freedom of speech is more important than the myth of J. Edgar Hoover." Or, "Freedom from war is more important than the myth of the nation-state."

In my estimation, the liberal attitude candidly defined by Roosevelt and dramatically illustrated by our California Democrats on Halloween, is one of the things most dangerously wrong with our society. You may have your definition of liberal. I have mine. A liberal is someone who will sell you out when the chips are really down on the table, and the going gets really rough.

Within this conception, the traditional cliches of liberal and conservative, reactionary and radical, are utterly meaningless. Conservatives have shown, as the Republicans showed on the bracero bill, that they are prepared to sell out the things they profess -- that they have no fixed principles, unless you can call the pursuit of the fast, easy buck a fixed principle. The reactionary hero, Goldwater, sounded at one time as though he believed firmly in certain things, however one might disagree with them. Now he is demonstrating that he, too, is willing to sell out his professed principles as he sniffs a higher office. As far as the so-called radical left is concerned, I would say that the most experienced and expert sell-out artists of them all have been Communists.

We are not a nation of sheep, we are a nation of liberals. Everybody is a liberal. All of us, waking and sleep-walking, are liberals of the right or left. We are all utterly bewitched by the doctrine that "politics is the art of the possible." It is part of this spell that we must always be open to a deal. It is part of this spell that we mustn't care very strongly about anything. And it isn't just our political institutions in which we have grown so flabby. Social institutions don't exist in watertight compartments. Precisely as it's now politically "naive" to believe really strongly in any particular political or economic reform, it's "square" to believe really strongly in the family, religion, the arts -- or anything.

The liberal attitude, the compromising attitude, the lukewarm attitude, bids fair to become the death of us all. The human species would have died out long ago -- or, at best, would still be living in caves and eating raw meat -- if there hadn't emerged, from time to time, a few utopians who saw that things didn't have to be done the way they were being done; who proposed better ways -- and, what is most important, stuck to their proposals no matter how unreasonable, or irritating, or ridiculous they seemed to everyone else.

If we are going to be saved from the things which really threaten us -- from international anarchy, from the witless march of automation, from the sin of racial bigotry -- we have to have something better than liberalism. We have to have a new politics, an authentically radical politics. And here is the second working definition I would like to suggest: to be radical, these days, is to believe in and work for something uncompromisingly. That is what is rarest in our society -- not what you believe, but the intensity of your belief.

In these terms, it appears to me that the only politically effective radicals in the country (and this suggestion may shock you) are the Southern Democrats in Congress. Northern Congressmen will sell out on the principles they mouth; Southern Democrats, apparently, will never sell out on the one and only thing they believe in. Which illustrates the point that true believers can be dangerous, when they are given to the service of inhumane values. But what is needed is not fewer true believers, as Eric Hoffer and others suggest, but more true believers given to the service of humane values. What is needed is Northern representatives who will not sell out, because we, the represented, will not sell out: on farm labor rights, Negro rights, civil liberties, the abolition of capital punishment, national health insurance, world government, and all the rest. What is needed, if you please, is politicians who conceive politics as the art of the impossible. Or, more accurately, what seems impossible for the moment. Anything new always seems impossible right up to the instant it becomes an accomplished fact.

I will have to leave it to the civil rights organizations to tell you how to be really radical in the arena of racial justice. I will have to leave it to the peace organizations to tell you some concrete ways you can be really radical on the issue of world government. You may ask the more modest question: how can a person be really radical with respect to farm labor? Obviously, it means something more than writing to praise your Congressman if he voted against the bracero system, or to blame him if he voted for it. Obviously, it means something more than joining Citizens for Farm Labor or subscribing to the CFL magazine.

²⁰Along other things, radicalism on any issue requires avoidance of cooperation with evil. If you think, for example, that it is basically wicked for an enormously wealthy corporation to use its power to smash its employees' request for a pathetic \$1.25 an hour, you can stop buying that corporation's products until it joins the human race and the 20th Century. To be more specific, you can stop buying the products of the California Packing Corporation, which for nearly a year now has been engaged in such a campaign against the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee. It's actually very simple. You just stop buying the Del Monte brand of canned goods, no matter how attractive you think their taste and their price.

And if you think that the bracero system is evil, you can do your best to stop supporting, through your purchases, the agricultural corporations which use braceros. Now, this will require a little more effort on your part. It will require a little research. You may learn, for example, that virtually all the oranges and lemons shipped from Southern California -- San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara Counties -- have been produced by bracero labor; whereas, for several years, none of the oranges and lemons produced in the Central California citrus belt, around Porterville, have been picked by braceros. To follow up this new-found knowledge may require a little discomfiture on your part. You may have to ask the manager of your friendly supermarket to let you into his produce storeroom to look at the labels on the citrus crates. If the crates came from Tulare County, you buy your citrus there. Otherwise, you take your trade elsewhere, and you explain to the manager your reasons. He will probably look at you as though you're some kind of nut. Well, there's no help for it. To be radical is to be some kind of nut. But it has its rewards. Your orange juice may taste a little sweeter if you know that in buying it, you are supporting a labor system of at least partially free men rather than a labor system of wholly captive men.

But here is the more basic point, and the point I hope to leave with you: what we most vitally need is to start being radical somewhere -- almost anywhere. If we can find it within ourselves to hold out for an uncompromising solution to just one social problem, it could jolt us awake from our moral sleepwalking. It could steel us to hold out for genuine solutions -- which have to be radical solutions -- to the whole array of problems which will overwhelm us if we don't wake up.

The sell-out of nine California Democrats on the bracero issue was a tragedy -- but not only because farm workers are mired in unjust, unfulfilled, dehumanized lives. All of us, to a greater or lesser extent, are mired in such lives together. If we would stop selling out in this one hidden sector of our society -- farm labor -- it might break the mythos of moderation which holds us in thrall, show us we don't have to be "liberals", that radicalism is possible after all. If we can wrestle with the forces which rode on Halloween and, for once, win -- we may gain the heart to struggle on from there toward an entire society suited for man rather than Mammon.

VOTES OF THE CALIFORNIA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION ON H.R. 8195
(To extend Public Law 78 until Dec. 31, 1964.)

Democrats			Republicans		
Name	District	Vote	Name	District	Vote
Harold (Biz) Johnson	2	Yea	Don Clausen	1	Yea
John Moss	3	Yea	William Mailliard	6	Yea
Robert Leggett	4	Yea	Charles Gubser	10	Yea
John Shelley	5	Not voting	J. Arthur Younger	11	Yea
Jeffery Cohelan	7	Nay	Burt Talcott	12	Yea
George Miller	8	Not voting	Charles Teague	13	Yea
Don Edwards	9	Nay	John Baldwin	14	Yea
John McFall	15	Yea	H. Allen Smith	20	Yea
B.F.Sisk	16	Yea	Del Clawson	23	Yea
Cecil King	17	Nay	Glenard Lipscomb	24	Yea
Harlan Hagen	18	Yea	Alphonso Bell, Jr.	28	Yea
Chet Holifield	19	Nay	Craig Hosmer	32	Yea
Augustus Hawkins	21	Nay	James Utt	35	Yea
James Corman	22	Nay	Bob Wilson	36	Yea
Ronald Cameron	25	Not voting	Minor Martin	38	Yea
James Roosevelt	26	Nay			
Everett Burkhalter	27	Nay			
George Brown, Jr.	29	Not voting*			
Edward Roybal	30	Nay			
Charles Wilson	31	Nay			
Harry Sheppard	33	Yea			
Richard Hanna	34	Yea			
Lionel Van Deerlin	37	Yea			

* Paired against.

SOURCE: Congressional Record, 88th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 19685-6.

"Mr. Chairman, we killed this bill once before... But (members of the Agriculture Committee) are adroit, they are hardworking and persistent, and here they are... Mr. Chairman, it is a little like the "September Song." If we had finished our business before September, we would never have come back on this bill. It is too bad that we did not. Mr. Chairman, I think we ought to be guided by the fact that (proponents) are going to be back next year. They admit it by refusing to say they will not... I heard the gentleman get extension after extension and argue for this bill. The longer I listened to him the more I became convinced that if his conscience is as twisted as his logic he is in bad shape...

"I cannot keep the Republicans from listening, but I want to talk to the Democrats -- I want the Democrats all to get behind this bill and pass it. We really ought to because the Farm Bureau is for it and they really help us Democrats out and we ought to help them out in a case like this. And then, two of the chief sponsors of the bill are the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. Gathings) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Rogers), they are for it and everybody knows that they go right down the line with the Democratic administration...and we ought to help them out.

"Finally, Mr. Chairman...if anybody here or anybody back home thinks I am not kidding -- let me disabuse him of that impression because I am."

Wayne Hays (Dem., Ohio), Congressional Record, Oct. 31, 1963.

The following fact sheet was prepared by the Emergency Committee to Aid Farm Workers, Los Angeles, from U.S. Census of Agriculture data. It is reproduced, with permission of the Emergency Committee, in abridged form.

FACTS ABOUT AGRICULTURE IN CALIFORNIA

1. The number of farms in California has declined by nearly 40,000 in 15 years.

	1944	1949	1954	1959
Farms	138,917	137,030	123,075	99,232

2. Farm acreage ownership has been concentrated in fewer farms.
6,012 farms (6.0% of total) own 27,877,003 acres (75.7% of total)

Farms, by acreage, California, 1959

Size, in acres	Farms Number	Percent	Average acreage	Total acreage	Percent of total
TOTAL	99,232	100.0	371.4	36,853,851	100.0
Under 10	24,120	24.3	4.0	96,058	0.3
10 - 49	34,575	34.8	24.0	828,960	2.2
50 - 69	5,628	5.7	57.8	325,464	0.9
70 - 99	6,027	6.1	81.4	490,630	1.3
100 - 139	4,619	4.7	115.6	534,008	1.5
140 - 179	3,906	3.9	156.8	612,506	1.7
180 - 219	2,267	2.3	197.5	447,730	1.2
220 - 259	1,811	1.8	237.4	429,975	1.2
260 - 499	5,816	5.9	359.2	2,089,013	5.7
500 - 999	4,451	4.5	701.5	3,122,504	8.5
1000 - 1999	2,820	2.8	1393.9	3,930,854	10.7
2000 or more	3,192	3.2	7501.9	23,946,149	65.0

3. A minority of large farms employ most of the hired farm labor.

Hired Farm Labor Expenditures, California, 1959

Expenditures	Farms Number	Percent	Average expenditure (estimated)	Total expenditures(estimated) Amount	Percent
TOTAL	99,232	100.0	\$ 5,026	\$498,742,765	100.0
None	36,949	37.2	---	---	---
\$199 or less	8,915	9.0	100	891,500	0.2
200 - 499	8,147	8.2	350	2,851,450	0.6
500 - 999	7,130	7.2	750	5,347,500	1.1
1000 - 2499	10,822	10.9	1,750	18,938,500	3.8
2500 - 4999	9,431	9.5	3,750	35,366,250	7.1
5000 - 9999	7,472	7.5	7,500	56,040,000	11.2
10000 - 19999	5,270	5.3	15,000	79,050,000	15.8
20000 - 49999	3,439	3.5	35,000	120,365,000	24.1
\$50,000 or more	1,658	1.7	108,500	179,892,565	36.1

36,949 farms (37.2% of all farms) make no expenditure for hired labor.
61,140 farms (61.1% of all farms) expend less than \$1,000 per year for hired labor.
5,097 farms (5.2%) account for 60.2% of all hired farm labor expenditures.

4. A small number of farms employ all the braceros in California.

7,694 farms (less than 8% of the total) employed all the 143,562 braceros contracted and recontracted in California in 1962.

The following testimony represents CFL's first foray into political action. It was prepared for oral delivery at a public hearing originally scheduled for November 25. This year, November 25 became a day of national mourning. The hearing on sugar beet wages has been rescheduled for December or January. The following testimony will be presented by a CFL spokesman at that time.

Testimony at Hearing of the Sugar Division, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stockton, California

Citizens for Farm Labor was recently formed by Californians from many walks of life, as part of the movement to bring industrial democracy and justice to the last remaining industry in America where labor relations are almost wholly undemocratic and unjust.

Our statement of principles and purposes reads, in part, "We of Citizens for Farm Labor conceive our basic task to be removal of the barricades of bondage which have been erected around agricultural workers. . . . Our goal is liberation of agricultural workers to assemble, to petition, to vote, to speak, to listen, to decide, to act on their own behalf." Toward this end, we engage in activities such as publication of a magazine, Farm Labor; research; organizational liaison; public information; and political and legal action, such as our testimony here today.

The advisory board of Citizens for Farm Labor includes attorneys, such as James Murray, Malcolm Burnstein, and Arthur Brunwasser; churchmen, such as Reverend Aron Gilmartin, Reverend Richard Byfield, Reverend Chris Hartmire, and Father Thomas McCullough; medical doctors such as Paul O'Rourke and Milton Roemer; university professors such as Seymour Lipset, Joe Tussman, Van Dusen Kennedy, and Joseph Fontenrose; civic leaders such as Nancy Swadesh, Herman Gallegos, Emma Gunterman, and Dorothy Kauffman; and farm workers and farm workers' representatives such as Cesar Chavez, Bard McAllister, and Andy Arellano.

In our view, it is a mockery of the "equal protection" amendment to the United States Constitution that workers in the biggest interstate industry of all, agriculture, are excluded from the Fair Labor Standards Act, with its minimum wage protections for all other workers engaged in or affecting interstate commerce. The mockery is compounded when the only piece of Federal Legislation which even pretends to protect farm workers' wage standards is administered in such a way it freezes them at levels far below anything at which an American wage earner and his family can survive in decency and dignity.

The Sugar Act of 1948 confers upon growers of sugar cane and beets a form of largesse which is one of the more bizarre anomalies in a

political economy which feigns horror at the very word, "socialism." The Act, in effect, guarantees a profit to producers of this particular commodity. It is evident, from the way sugar beet allotments are highly prized and coveted, that this aspect of the law is serving its purpose well. But we regret to say it is also evident that growers and administrators alike have slid into the easy assumption that this unusual law is nothing more than an out-and-out subsidy--a privilege without accompanying responsibilities. The fact is, however, that the same arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which sets and enforces prices at levels "fair" to growers, is supposed to set and enforce wages at levels "fair and reasonable" to sugar field workers.

We must leave it to others to testify on the manner this latter half of the law has historically been maladministered in Florida, Colorado, and other sugar producing areas. Here we can only review briefly some of the evidence which suggests to us that the Department's ideas about "fair and reasonable" wages for beet workers in California are a travesty.

The most striking thing about the fixing of sugar beet wages in California, over the past ten or twelve years, is the manner in which they have faithfully reflected what bracero-users were able to get braceros for, rather than anything remotely resembling an acceptable American wage. During the eight years the sugar beet growers of Imperial County were allowed to import braceros at 70¢ an hour, the Department of Agriculture unflinchingly agreed that 70¢ an hour was a "fair and reasonable" wage for sugar beet workers. When Imperial County growers were required to pay 75¢, that, by intriguing coincidence, became a "fair and reasonable" wage. When the bracero rate went up to 85¢ an hour, so did the U.S. Department of Agriculture's conception of "fair and reasonable". And, when the U.S. Department of Labor began requiring Imperial County Growers to pay Mexican Nationals at the lofty rate of \$1.00 an hour, that became the Department of Agriculture's standard, too.

With such administrative procedures, it is small wonder that sugar beet culture is still thoroughly dominated by braceros in many parts of California. This, of course, sets the pace for domestic workers in other areas, under the now-famous formula, "If you don't like it, we'll get Nationals." Official data from the California Department of Employment reveal that on June 2, 1962, 430 of 500 beet workers in Solano County were braceros: 86%. On May 26, 360 of 380 beet workers in Colusa County were braceros: 95%. On May 19, 300 of 300 beet workers in Butte County were braceros. It is difficult to become much more bracero-dominated than that. At that very time of year, incidentally, Butte County is the site of widespread unemployment and underemployment of local farm workers. There was, for example, a surfeit of peach thinners. Maybe the fact the hourly wage for peach-thinning is 25% higher than beet thinning has something to do with it.

This disparity clearly demonstrates the point we are making: the arbitrary procedures of the Department of Agriculture, in combination with the availability of Mexican contract workers under Public Law 78, have yielded a completely administered, frozen wage level in sugar beet work, which bears little relationship to wage developments in other crop-activities and no relationship to fairness or reasonableness. The so-called minimum wage for beet workers has become a ceiling rather than a floor. If this is the intent of Congress, the only fair and reasonable thing to do is complete the equation by putting a ceiling on the price we have to pay for sugar at our corner supermarket. And, of course, by putting a ceiling on the profits which growers are allowed to reap.

Let us move on to a second basic point. In most beet-growing areas, thinning is paid on a piece rate rather than an hourly basis. In California, piece rates vary widely--from as little as \$9 an acre to as much as \$25 an acre. There are, of course, differences in width of rows, quality of soil, and so forth, which can account for some of this variation. But, having observed California growers' associations in action in many crops over many years, we are reasonably certain that piece rates are determined by nothing so much as the state of desperation of farm workers themselves. If, for example, the farm labor pool in Kern County is overflowing in March, with two or three workers for every job--hungry workers, workers bereft of unemployment insurance or any other protections--beet growers will naturally take advantage of this fact to set piece rates low, in the unilateral way they have taken for granted over the decades. In San Benito County, in May, where a row crop worker may make \$1.25 an hour thinning lettuce, and where there happens to be a Farm Placement Representative courageous enough to hold out against growers' demands for braceros, the beet growers association may have to offer piece rates nearly three times as high as those in Kern County.

Here is the question we want to ask the U.S. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Sugar Division: what, if any, are its procedures for ascertaining whether piece rates yield an hourly equivalent which is "fair and reasonable," even within the Department's own inadequate terms? Does it conduct wage surveys? Does it inform workers that they are entitled to an hourly equivalent, no matter what the piece rate? Does it have compliance officers in the field to whom workers can turn for enforcement of their paper "rights"?

Let us come right down to cases. The theoretical minimum wage in California this year was \$1.05 an hour. But most of the actual thinning in the Stockton area was done at \$16 an acre. According to the law, every sugar beet worker, including those who went out on a day haul, for only one day, or only half a day, or any length of time, were supposed to receive the equivalent of at least \$1.05 an hour for their labor. Did they,

in fact? How does the Department of Agriculture know? Suppose a beet thinner worked for a week or two, and averaged only 75¢ an hour under the unilateral piece rate system. We assure you this is not a far-fetched supposition. What was that worker expected to do? Was he expected to know his rights intuitively? Was he expected to demand a wage adjustment from the driver of his bus--who would doubtless laugh in his face? From a labor contractor whom he has probably never seen? From a grower whom he has almost undoubtedly never seen? From the Deputy Labor Commissioner in Stockton? Or is he expected to hitch-hike to the office of the ASCS, accompanied by an attorney, and press his claims? Merely to pose the questions is to suggest the conclusion: the "fair and reasonable" wage of \$1.05 an hour is worse than unfair and unreasonable; it is an empty fiction which has no meaning at all in the life of the sugar beet worker who does not know his paper "rights" and has even less inkling of how he might go about securing such "rights."

We make bold to suggest that the majority of beet culture workers in California do not, in fact, average so much as \$1.05 an hour, and that the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service is therefore culpable in a second major respect. In the first place, it sets wages which are manifestly substandard. And, in the second place, it makes no apparent effort to enforce even those substandard wage levels.

What is a "fair and reasonable" wage in the economy of the United States of America, in the year 1963? The most rigorous and objective answer to this question, so far as we know, is to be found in research by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (a different bureau, may we note, than the one which administers the bracero program). In September, 1959, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported, following a scientific survey, that a family of four--husband, wife, and two children--in the San Francisco area, needed an annual income of \$6,304 to maintain a "modest but adequate standard of living." In the intervening four years, the Consumer Price Index in the San Francisco area has risen by 5.9%. Thus, the average family today would need \$6,675 a year to survive at a modest but adequate level.

We doubt very much that the cost of living varies substantially from one part of California to another, but let us lean over backward, and be very conservative, and assume that a family of four in sugar beet areas, such as San Joaquin County, needs only \$6,000 for a level of living generally considered acceptable in our culture. Assuming year-around employment, defined as 40 hours of work per week, for 50 weeks, this would require wages of exactly \$3.00 an hour. But agricultural workers, including sugar beet workers, do not usually enjoy year-around employment. Recent studies by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (a different bureau, may we note, than the one which administers the sugar program) indicate that the average farm laborer in the lower San Joaquin Valley of California gets work less than 150 days a year, and the average is going down every year. This means that farm laborers would need to earn at least \$5 an hour to maintain a modest but tolerable standard of living. This, we suggest, is one working definition of "fair and reasonable"

wages in the industry of agriculture as it operates today. We commend it to anyone who wishes to approach the concept logically and seriously.

There may be those who will say this is unrealistic. We would not be overwhelmingly surprised if there were. But we are sure of this much: if sugar beet growers and their colleagues were obliged to pay wages which yielded a modest annual total of this sort, they would quickly take such steps as are necessary and feasible to offer more than 150 days of work in a year. And, furthermore, they would quickly importune their friends in the Agricultural Experiment Stations to develop a coated seed or some other technique to take the back-breaking and unnecessary hand labor out of beet culture. They would have done so long ago, obviously, if it hadn't been for the combined kindness of the Departments of Agriculture and Labor in furnishing them with workers at one-fifth the price needed to sustain a decent level of life.

Very well. In the interests of conservatism, we shall not talk about a single leap from \$1.05 to a truly fair and reasonable wage. What shall we talk about, as a first step? On November 20, less than a week ago, the AFL-CIO national convention, and its president, George Meany--hardly to be considered a wild-eyed young turk--called for a federal minimum wage of \$2.00 an hour. We do not see how we can suggest any less. Even this is embarrassingly low, in terms of what the Bureau of Labor Statistics tells us is needed. When one talks about wages of \$2.00 an hour, one is tacitly acknowledging either (a) the wife and/or children must work, too; or (b) the family will not, in fact, enjoy a "modest but adequate standard of living"; or (c) that the labor force shall consist of single men and women. Agriculture, as we know, has long considered all-male gangs a beau ideal in labor relations. This, we will never concede.

The Department of Agriculture is ethically and legally obligated not only to set sugar wages which are, after these fifteen years, really fair and reasonable by some generally recognized social criterion. It is equally obligated to create whatever machinery is needed to enforce such determinations. Among other things, this means a massive and bona fide campaign of educating sugar field workers of their rights under the law. It means regular interviews with workers in all areas where piece rates are used, to make certain the rates per row or per acre are producing hourly earnings not less than the amount necessary to produce a decent standard of living. It means, furthermore, a grievance procedure, readily accessible to workers, through which they can collect back wages due them when piece rates fail to yield the requisite hourly equivalent. We remind you that the law says nothing about statistical averages; it says nothing about 90% formulas, or any of the other gimmicks the Department of Labor has played with from time to time in the bracero program. The law says each worker shall receive the equivalent of the hourly guarantee. So long as the law is on the books, let the Department of Agriculture set up

whatever apparatus is required to enforce it down to the individual level. In addition to demonstrating that ours is a society in which we respect the law, this will relieve unemployment among statisticians, survey interviewers, and others from the ranks of the technologically unemployed.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views. We have enjoyed it, even though we are under no illusions that the Department of Agriculture will pay any attention to any of our recommendations. We are well aware there is only one way of arriving at a really viable concept of what is "fair and reasonable" in a free economy, and that is through collective bargaining between representatives of management and labor. When collective bargaining is permitted to function, experience shows that our suggestion of \$2.00 an hour is, in fact, too low. The only area in which the agricultural economy has worked in a manner even vaguely resembling the way our economy of countervailing forces is supposed to work is Hawaii. So far as we know, there are no collectively bargained wage levels in the sugar fields there as low as \$2.00 an hour -- and that is to say nothing of fringe benefits, which certainly average at least another 50¢ an hour.

Whatever else the Sugar Act of 1948 does and fails to do, it demonstrates for all the skeptics to see that workers cannot afford to leave their fate to any agency of government. It makes no difference whether the administration is Republican or Democratic. The government left to its own devices simply cannot, or will not, see that industrial justice is done. When the U. S. Department of Agriculture says \$1.25 an hour is sufficient protection for farm workers, then we say that farm workers need to be protected from such protection.

Since the above was written, we have been reminded that one of the demands unanimously adopted by the March on Washington for Freedom and Jobs was a national minimum wage of \$2.00 an hour -- with no agricultural or other exclusions. This may be added to the reasons why our recommendations in the foregoing testimony are altogether within the stream of other, larger social forces and developments.

"A couple of weeks ago, the other fellows and I in Tracy were thinning sugar beets... We were paid 90¢ an hour. ...please believe me, we were earning that 90¢... Anyway, I guess the growers didn't want to pay us 90¢. So one morning, after we had been picked up by the truck and had gotten out to the field, they told us we were being changed to a piece rate. We would get a certain amount for thinning a half-mile row. So we tried it out. We found that the most we could make under the piece-rate system was 65¢ an hour. It was the same field we had been in before. It was the same crew. We were all experienced. We were doing our best. But we couldn't possibly make wages. So we (left)... I suppose they have Nationals thinning their sugar beets now."

Arthur Cooper, April 27, 1959

The facts in the following article are abstracted from "The Story of the 1963 California Legislature", by the Friends Committee on Legislation. Copies of the pamphlet are available, without charge, from FCL, 2160 Lake Street, San Francisco. Bob Mang, who edited the following article, is Bay Area representative of the FCL. He is a founding member of Citizens for Farm Labor.

THE FATE OF FARM WORKERS, SACRAMENTO, 1963.

Robert Mang

Literally thousands of bills were dropped into the hopper of the California Assembly and Senate this year. In the space available here, we cannot possibly describe all the bills which were of indirect interest to the farm labor movement -- such, for example, as the Burton bill to extend Aid to Needy Children benefits to families with a father who is unemployed and seeking work. This could be of tremendous help to many farm labor families -- assuming it is implemented by the rural counties.

But we shall here confine our discussion to bills dealing directly with agricultural labor as such. Not many of these were introduced, and only three minor ones were enacted. We shall comment, particularly, on the bills which, although unsuccessful, proposed new approaches to old problems, and one major bill which came dramatically close to enactment.

1. AB 649, introduced by Carlos Bee (Dem., Hayward), would have established a state minimum wage of \$1.50 an hour, with no agricultural exclusion. AB 650, also introduced by Assemblyman Bee, was a "little Fair Labor Standards Act" which included overtime pay and other provisions in addition to a minimum wage. Both AB 649 and AB 650 died in the Committee on Industrial Relations of the Assembly.

2. SB 811, introduced by Senator John Holmdahl (Dem., Oakland), was a "little Wagner Act", which would have provided collective bargaining procedures for all California workers, including agricultural workers. It died in the Senate Labor Committee.

3. Assemblyman Philip Soto (Dem., Los Angeles) introduced a series of four bills dealing with farm labor contractors. AB 2633 increases from \$1000 to \$5000 the bond required of a farm labor contractor. It passed both houses and has been signed into law by the governor. AB 2634 provides that such contractors must furnish their workers with a statement showing wage deductions in detail. This has also been passed and signed into law. AB 2635 would have required, rather than merely permitted, the State Labor Commissioner to suspend the license of a farm labor contractor in violation of any of the laws governing his operation. This bill went from the Assembly Industrial Relations Committee to "interim study". AB 2928 would have made it a misdemeanor for any person to act as a farm labor contractor without a license. It died in the Industrial Relations Committee.

4. AB 2485 was introduced by Charles Meyers (Dem., San Francisco). It would have required the California Department of Public Health to maintain health programs for migratory workers, including the establishment of clinics and other public health facilities in migrant-using areas. (Present law is permissive rather than mandatory in these respects.) AB 2485 passed the Assembly Industrial Relations Committee, and then went to the Ways and Means Committee, where it was referred to "interim study".

5. SB 1396, by Walter Stiern (Dem., Bakersfield) provided for the acquisition and operation of farm labor centers by city and county housing authorities. An apparently minor bill, making legal what some housing authorities were already doing, it suddenly seemed important when, on May 29, the US House of Representatives gave the appearance of killing the bracero program. SB 1396 passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor.

6. AB 1407 was introduced by Charles Garrigus (Dem., Fresno). This, and the following bill, would have weakened existing regulations affecting agricultural workers. AB 1407 would have prohibited the Department of Industrial Relations from fixing the maximum hours of male minors older than 16 in certain types of farm and packinghouse work, and would have lowered the maximum age for regulating the work hours of minors from 18 to 16 years of age. This bill died in the Industrial Relations Committee.

7. AB 1717, by Alan Pattee (Rep., Salinas), would have considered a labor camp in conformity with health and sanitation standards if it conformed to regulations for bracero housing. (In several respects, California's labor camp code is more stringent than the Secretary of Labor's bracero camp regulations.) AB 1717 also died in the Industrial Relations Committee.

8. AB 2227, introduced by Alfred Song (Dem., Monterey Park), was vigorously sponsored by the Emergency Committee to Aid Farm Workers of Los Angeles. AB 2227 embodied a simple and seemingly logical concept, but one which was new to the California legislative scene: why shouldn't we offer our own farm laborers the same recruitment and transportation program, and the same guarantees in regard to earnings, housing and safety, that we provide for the imported Mexican contract workers? The bracero protections were written into a voluntary farm labor recruitment plan which was presented as AB 2227.

While generally the Song bill was supported by those trying to create better conditions for farm labor, some objected that the state machinery set up was not what the field workers wanted and that, under an unfriendly administration, it might be used against them. These objections were quieted somewhat by the refusal of the US House of Representatives to renew the bracero program, when it became evident that some new program for domestic workers, especially in the field of housing, was urgently needed.

Because of the novelty and complexity of the proposed new program, AB 2227 was amended several times before being passed out of the Assembly Committee on Industrial Relations with a "do pass" recommendation. It went to Ways and Means where, after further amendment, it was referred to an interim study.

9. AB 2514, also introduced by Assemblyman Song, took a new approach to a minimum wage for farm labor. It provided that no grower could pay less than the prevailing wage as established by the Department of Employment. This is one of the bracero protections under federal law: the department determines what is the prevailing wage in areas and in crops where imported workers are used, and no bracero user may pay less than this.

Despite this precedent, grower groups opposed the bill, arguing that this would put the Department of Employment into the business of establishing "minimum wages". After much discussion, and amendment, the Assembly Committee on Industrial Relations gave AB 2514 a "do pass" vote and sent it to Ways and Means. There it was amended again and then it died.

10. The only major farm labor legislation which came close to passage in the 1963 California legislature was AB 547, introduced by Assemblyman Philip Burton (Dem., San Francisco). This bill proposed to remove the agricultural exclusion from the State Unemployment Insurance Act.

A similar measure, AB 193, by Edward Elliot (Dem., Los Angeles), would have removed the exclusion from certain public employees and employees of non-profit organizations as well as agricultural workers. The California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, sponsored AB 193, but did not attempt to move it at any time during the entire session.

The Friends Committee on Legislation has taken the position that agricultural workers should have the same rights and the same protections under social legislation that other workers enjoy. This year, the FCL placed its entire efforts in this field in an attempt to bring farm laborers under unemployment insurance coverage, through AB 547.

AB 547 was left for dead after it received a negative vote from the subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Finance and Insurance in March. The Department of Employment had testified that coverage of farm workers would bring in only \$17 million per year in premiums from growers and that it would cost \$66 million per year in benefits. According to their testimony, this would leave a \$49 million negative account which the rest of the contributors to the unemployment insurance fund would have to carry. The implication was that this would place the entire unemployment insurance program in fiscal jeopardy.

It had also become evident by this time that organized labor was not going to make a serious effort to bring California's most depressed and poorest paid workers under the protection of jobless insurance.

The FCL and two other groups continued working on the issue; these two were the Community Service Organization and the Farm Workers Association. For two months, they studied statistics on farm labor and on unemployment insurance. They pored over the Department of Employment material on which the \$66 million benefit estimate was based. They found that the Department's \$66 million estimate was based on projections from a statistically unsound study that had been made twelve years ago. A firm conclusion from the two-month study was that farm labor statistics are extremely unreliable. "We are working with Alice-in-Wonderland figures", said one economist in the field.

The considerable extent to which the Department of Employment figures might be off was revealed in a comparison of its estimates on disability insurance with the actual results. In 1959 the Department told the legislature that disability coverage for farm workers would bring in \$6.3 million in premiums and would cost \$7.8 million each year in claims. During the first 18 months that the program was in operation, \$6.1 million was paid in premiums and only \$1.6 million was paid out in claims. Instead of the deficit of \$1.5 million predicted by the Department of Employment, the disability fund gained a surplus of \$4.5 million.

The FCL estimated that, at the most, jobless insurance benefits for farm workers would total \$24 million per year, or only \$7 million more than growers would pay into the fund. The cost might possibly be less; it almost certainly would not be more. All indications were that unemployment insurance for farm labor would be less a burden on the fund than is present coverage for workers in food processing, furniture and fixtures, water transportation, retail trade, eating and drinking places, motion pictures and some other industries.

In the meantime, an intensive campaign for unemployment insurance for farm labor rallied strong support up and down the state and in the Capitol. The Assembly leadership pledged its support. On the Senate side, Senator George Miller (Dem., Martinez), chairman of the Finance Committee, and other key men had promised to vote for a farm labor unemployment insurance bill when it reached their house.

After being amended so that benefit payments would not start until the second quarter of 1965 -- a provision that would permit growers' premiums to build up a cushion against possible adverse effect on the fund -- AB 547 left the subcommittee "without recommendation".

The bill then went to full Finance and Insurance Committee of the Assembly. Hugh Folk, a University of California Economics Professor, drove to Sacramento on Sunday, June 9, to present the substantive testimony. Dolores Huerta, representing the Community Service Organization and the Farm Workers Association, and Joe Gunterman of the FCL, presented supporting testimony. The opposition came from growers, bankers, business groups, and the State Chamber of Commerce.

The committee first voted down, 8-11, a motion to send AB 547 to interim study. The vote was: NO: Mills, Zenovich, Beilenson, Burton, Casey, Foran, Knox, Moreno, Rumford, Waite, Waldie. YES: Ashcraft, Flournoy, Hinckley, Stevens, Thelin, Veneman, Veysey, Willson. Not voting: Bane. Then it moved the bill out with a "do pass" recommendation to the Assembly floor by a voice vote. There were some nay votes but the yeas clearly had it.

Near midnight on June 11, the last day for the Assembly to pass on its own bills, AB 547 reached the Assembly floor. The first vote was 39-35. A "call of the House" was put on while sergeants-at-arms and proponents of the measure hurried through the corridors looking for missing Assemblymen. On repeated calls of the absentees, the vote shifted to 40-35, then to 40-36, and finally to a 42-35 count for passage. (See voting record at conclusion of the article). (A minimum of 41 votes -- a majority of the 80-member Assembly -- were needed for passage.)

Caught in the final log jam on the Senate side, AB 547 was heard before only three members of a self-constituted subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Insurance and Financial Institutions and then taken "under submission" for a vote by the full committee. The committee vote, taken in private by Senator Dolwig, chairman, was against the bill. According to Senator Dolwig's office, one was for, three against, five not voting. Their names were not disclosed.

AB 547 was the first bill for unemployment insurance for farm labor, in four successive tries in the past eight years, to get out of any committee. Its supporters feel that they were much closer to victory in the Senate than most of those who predicted the defeat realized. A major blow to the bill's chances was the illness of Senator Miller, one of the most influential men in the Senate. He was hospitalized with a heart attack which prevented him from being present in Sacramento during the latter part of the session.

An interesting report from a source close to the Senate scene is that AB 547 was killed in the Senate committee at the request of certain Senators who had promised to vote for the bill when they thought it had no chance of reaching their house. Caught by the unexpected arrival of AB 547, they asked their colleagues on the committee to stave off a floor vote.

* * * * *

This was the third general session of the California legislature since the 1958 elections, when the Democratic party captured a substantial majority of the seats in both houses for the first time in many decades. In 1959, a major fight was waged by the Brown Administration and by labor groups, on behalf of a state minimum wage. It was killed by referral to "interim study" by the Senate Labor Committee. In 1961, the Governor reversed his previous views on minimum wages and other rights for farm labor. Organized labor declined to press seriously for any significant farm labor legislation. Disability insurance, however, was extended to agricultural workers that year, largely through the persistent efforts of Dolores Huerta and Joe Gunterman. In 1963, again, there was no leadership from any of the "big liberal" forces. The "little liberals", however, came surprisingly close to breaching a really major barrier on the road to equal rights for agricultural workers. It is not too early to begin planning now for the next general session in 1965. It is not unrealistic to plan the most serious assault yet on the exclusions which tend to reduce farm labor to an untouchable caste.

Final Roll-Call Vote in the Assembly on AB 547, June 11, 1963.

Allen (Los Angeles)	Dem.	No
Alquist (San Jose)	Dem.	Yes
Ashcraft (Rancho Santa Fe)	Rep.	No
Badam (Costa Mesa)	Rep.	No
Bagley (San Rafael)	Rep.	No
Bane (North Hollywood)	Dem.	Yes
Barnes (San Diego)	Rep.	No
Bee (Hayward)	Dem.	Not Voting
Beilenson (Beverly Hills)	Dem.	Yes
Belotti (Eureka)	Rep.	No
Booth (Orland)	Dem.	No
Britschgi (Redwood City)	Rep.	No
Burgener (San Diego)	Rep.	No
Burton (San Francisco)	Dem.	Yes
Carrell (San Fernando)	Dem.	Yes
Casey (Bakersfield)	Dem.	Yes
Chapel (Palos Verdes)	Rep.	No
Collier (Los Angeles)	Rep.	No
Cologne (Indio)	Rep.	No
Conrad (Sherman Oaks)	Rep.	No
Crown (Alameda)	Dem.	Yes
Cusanovich (Van Nuys)	Rep.	No
Danielson (Los Angeles)	Dem.	Yes
Dannemeyer (Fullerton)	Dem.	No
Davis (Portola)	Dem.	No
Deukmejian (Long Beach)	Rep.	No

Dills (Gardena)	Dem.	Yes
Donovan (Chula Vista)	Rep.	No
Dymally (Los Angeles)	Dem.	Yes
Elliott (Los Angeles)	Dem.	Yes
Ferrell (Los Angeles)	Dem.	Yes
Flournoy (Claremont)	Rep.	No
Foran (San Francisco)	Dem.	Yes
Frew (Dinuba)	Dem.	Not Voting
Gaffney (San Francisco)	Dem.	Yes
Garrigus (Reedley)	Dem.	Yes
Gonsalves (Artesia)	Dem.	Yes
Greene (Sacramento)	Dem.	Yes
Henson (Ventura)	Dem.	No
Hinckley (Redlands)	Rep.	No
Holmes (Santa Barbara)	Rep.	No
Johnson (El Monte)	Dem.	Yes
Kennick (Long Beach)	Dem.	Yes
Knox (Richmond)	Dem.	Yes
Lanterman (La Canada)	Rep.	No
Lunardi (Roseville)	Dem.	No
Marks (San Francisco)	Rep.	No
McMillan (Los Angeles)	Dem.	Yes
Meyers (San Francisco)	Dem.	Yes
Miliias (Gilroy)	Rep.	No
Mills (San Diego)	Dem.	Yes
Monagan (Tracy)	Rep.	No
Moreno (Santa Fe Springs)	Dem.	Yes
Mulford (Oakland)	Rep.	No
Pattee (Salinas)	Rep.	No
Petris (Oakland)	Dem.	Yes
Porter (Compton)	Dem.	Not Voting
Powers (North Sacramento)	Dem.	Yes
Quimby (San Bernadino)	Dem.	Yes
Rumford (Berkeley)	Dem.	Yes
Ryan (San Francisco)	Dem.	Yes
Song (Monterey Park)	Dem.	Yes
Soto (La Puente)	Dem.	Yes
Stanton (San Jose)	Dem.	Yes
Stevens (Los Angeles)	Rep.	No
Thelin (Glendale)	Rep.	No
Thomas (San Pedro)	Dem.	Yes
Unruh (Inglewood)	Dem.	Yes
Veneman (Modesto)	Rep.	No
Vesey (Brawley)	Rep.	No
Waite (Tujunga)	Dem.	Yes
Waldie (Antioch)	Dem.	Yes
Warren (Los Angeles)	Dem.	Yes
Whetmore (Los Alamitos)	Rep.	No
Williamson (Bakersfield)	Rep.	Yes
Willson (Huntington Park)	Dem.	Yes
Winton (Merced)	Dem.	No
Young (Napa)	Dem.	Yes
Z'Berg (Sacramento)	Dem.	Yes
Zenovich (Fresno)	Dem.	Yes

SUMMARY: Democrats: Yes--41; No--7; 3 not voting.
 Republicans: Yes--1; No--28.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS....

I am delighted to hear that you are still working in the green fields and keeping up the good fight. I will be glad to do anything that I can to help out.

Paul Jacobs,
San Francisco and Santa Barbara

....best of luck for your important work.

Milton I. Roemer, M.D.,
Los Angeles.

...excellent....

Rev. Aron Gilmartin,
Walnut Creek.

I appreciate your continuing interest in the plight of the migrant workers... Will be grateful to you if I could continue to receive Farm Labor.

Henry B. Gonzalez, M.C.,
Washington, D.C.

You and your staff have really gotten together some dynamite that is long overdue. The presentation was outstanding. We intend to help in any way we can. Vincent Bourke (member of Peter Maurin House, ED.) is anxious to do labor contracting with a bus we have located next year, giving the pickers what the contractor now takes.... Now that farm work has slacked off, we are feeding 75 at supper and sleeping 40 or more at Peter Maurin House. If you ever want to have a CFL meeting there, we would welcome it.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kauffman,
Oakland.

I accept your invitation to serve on the Advisory Board of CFL. Please be assured that I will be more than happy to serve in any capacity to help achieve the goals of the organization.

Herman Gallegos,
San Francisco.

One of my objections to your magazine is your narrow viewpoint. Why fight the big farmers just on the battlefield of migrant farm labor? They can always claim a shortage of farm labor and you are hard pushed to prove otherwise. I am fighting them on all battlefields: farm labor, escape local taxes, prevent enforcement of the 160 acre limitation, do not pay the correct amount for irrigation water, are "millionaire moochers" and get more charity than the migrant farmworker. Your magazine is not going to be seen by migrant farmworkers; it will be read by people in non-farm pursuits so you have to show them how they are personally involved in the problems. The only way to do this is to show the non-farm people that they have to pay high taxes to support the "millionaire moochers". This is the way I run my Newsletters. By a varied attack. Where before, many people were not interested since they are not farmworkers, they are now interested because they have found out that they pay more in taxes and electricity bills. I have made it a personal matter to them. In this way, you are able to help the migrant farmworkers....

Ben Yellen, M.D.
Brawley.

Thank you...for sending me the first issue of your magazine, Farm Labor. I found it most interesting. ... I assure you of my continued support in your efforts to improve the welfare of our farm labor population.

Hon. Don Edwards, M.C.,
Washington, D.C.

Congratulations on the formation of CFL and more particularly on the launching of your magazine Farm Labor. As you may know, this Spring the Governor's Advisory Commission on Housing Problems, of which I was Executive Director, published a study on housing in agricultural areas. Frankly, I feel this was more than just "another study", since it embodied some definitive recommendations. For some time, I have been looking for a forum for an article reviewing the Commission's findings in the area of farm worker housing. I particularly should like to do this because the Commission no longer exists and I am again a private citizen, free to express my unfettered comments on the problem and make some recommendations of my own. ... If you would be interested in such an article, please let me know.

Gerald Hill, Attorney-at-Law,
San Francisco.

A publication such as yours is needed although the organization is 90,001. I wish you the best of success in your endeavor to bring the facts on the deplorable condition of farm labor to the citizens of Northern California.... Perhaps in the next issue you could ask each subscriber to suggest the names of interested persons.

Jerome Schwartz,
Berkeley.

...most valuable....

Mrs. W. W. Goodman,
Seaside.

Good luck on your new group.

Arnold Mayer,
Washington, D.C.

I just finished reading Farm Labor and specifically the article on pesticides. As you probably know, the senate agricultural committee just concluded its hearing on pesticides and the only testimony which had to do with safety of workers came from Brubaker of the State Dept. of Industrial Relations and from two sources, it was reported as "too weak" and it was mainly concerned with workers who applied the spray. Senator O'Sullivan is not sure yet according to his last press release whether the committee is going to have another hearing. He is the chairman.

On the assembly side, there is a special committee on pesticide of which Rumford is the chairman.... Rumford may well decide to have hearings in rural areas.... It is going to be a hard problem to get local people to testify--you are well aware of the problem: often people don't know that they have been poisoned, many people just don't want to raise a fuss. This goes for some of the local farmers and their wives who have been sick as well as for the workers; this is apart from the problem of people being afraid of the pressure from organized agricultural and chemical companies....

Emma Gunterman,
Gridley.

I recently received a copy of the publication, Farm Labor. As per usual, these mailings do not cause me any concern since I feel that I know it all--ie. about farm labor. I left the publication on my desk for several days; then I decided to read it.

Once I began, I was absorbed by its contents. Your publication certainly has been given much thought. Your aims and purposes are extensive and far-reaching. You have programmed the entire field with exactness.

I was surprised to know, or to find out, how little I knew about certain aspects of farm labor. I repeat, I enjoyed the entire publication and will use it for reference.... I certainly would appreciate knowing how I can be of possible assistance in helping the farm worker share in the rights and benefits so many other workers now receive.

Louis Zarate,
San Jose.

Congratulations on your fine new magazine.... I especially liked "Blood on the Lettuce" as it did not blame PL 78 for the accident, but a whole attitude toward farm workers as non-entities. ... You are 100% correct in your analysis. PL 78 is only a refinement on the whole slave labor system.

...extremely well done and highly informative....

R. Denisoff,
San Francisco.

...you are a dangerous lunatic.

Dirk Van Nouhuys,
Berkeley.

...splendid.... More power to your elbow.

Duncan McIntyre,
Capitola.

...great!

D.C. Sonnichsen,
Menlo Park.

Keep up the good work....

Rev. James L. Vizzard, S.J.,
Washington, D.C.

It was our intention to solicit statements from California farm workers which would describe, in considerable detail, some particular problem which they had faced and the way in which they had resolved it. We felt this information would be helpful to agency personnel, as well as being of general interest. We had planned to solicit one such statement for each issue of the magazine, but before we had begun this task, the "Letter to the Editor" reproduced below was received, unsolicited. Our initial, if unfair, response to the letter was that Michael T. Lough was much too articulate to be a bona fide farm worker, so we wrote to Albion, Nebraska to inquire about his credentials. Satisfied by the reply received, we decided to print his letter as the first in this series; extracts from his second letter are also reproduced at the end. On advice of counsel, because of the uncertainties of California libel law, the names have been deleted to protect the guilty.

Albion, Nebraska
October 17, 1963

State of California
Department of Employment
371 Hayes Street
San Francisco, California

Gentlemen:

The value of the attached card to me is \$11.25, (he refers, undoubtedly, to the cards given field workers on piece rate which are punched each time a unit of work is completed and which indicate the total day's earnings. ED.) so please regard it with affection as it is my only record of slavery with that well-known leech of the afflicted, contractor ---- at the ----- Winery, ----, California.

The man did not anticipate that I would strike back, vainly believing himself more cunning than I. Foolish man, towering folly. Now I demand the simple justice of my money which he is withholding from me.

It began a week ago. You dispatched me from your office at 371 Hayes for ----'s den at ----. That was Friday, October 11. My understanding was that I was to be paid 15¢ a bucket for cutting grapes. My understanding was that I was to be charged \$2.00 a day for a bed and three meals.

Instead I was to discover that Mr. ---- pays only 13¢ a bucket, that he charges \$2.50 a day for a deplorably filthy bed and three unsanitary meals which provide not even the sustenance for the work at hand, that he takes out 65¢ for a grape cutting knife we were not told in San Francisco we would have to buy, and that he charges \$2.00 for bus transportation from San Francisco to ---- when your office made it abundantly clear that this transportation was free.

Let me make it clear that I did not ride that bus. It had already left and I hitch-hiked to ----, as I hitch-hiked back here to home in Nebraska when I got my fill of ----. However I demand for the men who have had this money taken from them that it be returned. It is quite obvious that it belongs to them, not Mr. ----.

The night I walked into ----'s camp I asked him if he would pay me the following night for the day's work. "Sure", he said. "No", he said after I had completed the day's work. "Why?" "Because you have to pay tomorrow's room and board." Now how's that for gall? Tomorrow's room and board in addition to today's out of today's check? That's ----'s way of keeping you in bondage apparently: 'Keep 'em poor and they're afraid to leave.' "I quit; pay me", I said. "Our regular payday's Friday", he said; "Get out." That's where he asked for this and I intend to give it to him right between the eyes.

I ask you what runs through ----'s mind when a poor man leaves his dump without his pay under such an accounting system? Does he really believe he will have to pay him? Or does he hope the miserable wretch will get lost, that he will be too stupid, too timid to discover the channel of demanding his money?

Here's what I want from Mr. ----: \$11.25 minus \$2.00 for one day's room and board, minus 11 or 12 cents for insurance. That's \$9.13. Now add \$3.50 for the cost of these letters, plus \$5.00 for the time I've had to waste writing and mailing them. My claim is for \$17.63 and if I were a rich man, it would be for much, much more. Furthermore, I am requesting that you suspend his operation until you have investigated my charges to find out if they are true. I request that the California Department of Public Health be drawn into this case to bring about an improvement in the dangerous sanitary conditions which prevail at Mr. ----'s camp. I request that the men be reimbursed in full for the Greyhound bus transportation money taken from them, the 65¢ they were not advised beforehand would be deducted from their salaries for grape knives, and all other monies which may have been falsely taken from them. I request that the Internal Revenue Service be invited into the investigation to discover if there are tax irregularities in Mr. ----'s operation. I request that the U.S. Immigration Service investigate this case to discover if Mr. ---- may be deported as an undesirable alien. I request the U.S. District Attorney in San Francisco, Attorney General Robert Kennedy and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to assist in the inquiry. I request the AFL-CIO to enter the investigation with the aim of prosecuting the violation of civil rights and as a boon in its efforts toward unionizing farm labor in this country. I request the Governor of California and the President of the United States, plus Labor Secretary John Celebrezze^(sic) to make themselves aware of this tragic situation which makes California farm labor a human disaster at times like this.

Finally, I would like to put the San Francisco Chronicle, the San Francisco Examiner, Time, Newsweek, CBS, NBC, and ABC on the trail of a hot story.

Respectfully,

s. Michael T. Lough

Michael T. Lough
SS 506-40-7145

copies to:

California Department of Labor
California Department of Health
Internal Revenue Service, San Francisco
U.S. Immigration Service, San Francisco
U.S. District Attorney, San Francisco
U.S. Attorney General
Federal Bureau of Investigation
AFL-CIO, San Francisco
Governor, State of California
President of the United States
U.S. Labor Secretary
San Francisco Chronicle
San Francisco Examiner
Time Magazine
Newsweek Magazine
Columbia Broadcasting System
National Broadcasting Company
American Broadcasting Company
Farm Labor Magazine
----- Winery
Mr. ----

The following contains excerpts from a second letter received from Mr. Lough in response to our inquiry as to whether he had really been a California farm worker, what his background was, etc.

Dear Miss Goepel:

Mr. ---- still hasn't paid me. I'm waiting, constitutionally certain that ---- will go the way of all flesh. As to how I fell into California farm work, I was just there when opportunity failed to knock. Farm work could be a decent and enjoyable occupation if conditions were improved somewhat. ... I hope by this attempt at cheap revenge I will be of some assistance to the farm workers' movement in California and elsewhere.

I've been all over the country, came to California last July from Houston, Texas where I was a beer vendor for the Houston Colts. My object was to try to get on with the Dodgers in the same capacity. Alas. So I drifted into the Modesto area where I picked peaches and knocked a few almonds around, then got into the grapes. It's great work if you work for the individual farmer. I've worked for some contractors who have treated me very well too. But ----, Well, three weeks ago today, I left Modesto for San Francisco, then to ---- to work for ----. I was there one day. My home is here in Nebraska and I hadn't been back for 7 months. So I hitch-hiked back; Now I work for the West Point (Neb.) Republican, a weekly newspaper. I'm learning the linotype.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

The next issue of Farm Labor will include several contributions which illuminate one of the grounding assumptions of Citizens for Farm Labor: that the hydra-headed agricultural labor "problem," reduced to its essence, is a problem in civil rights and civil liberties. From this theoretical premise, follows the operational premise that the farm labor movement, the civil rights movement, and civil libertarians have a great deal of value to say to each other, if they will only listen. We propose never to let our end of the conversation slacken.

Among the materials we expect to carry in Volume I, Number 3 are:

...an article by Paul O'Rourke, who has long been active in NAACP and similar groups, on the relationship between the civil rights and farm labor "revolutions."

...an article by Attorney Art Brunwasser on California social and labor legislation as it applies differentially to agricultural workers and industrial workers.

...extracts from an amicus curiae brief by the Northern California branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, to the U.S. Supreme Court, requesting a writ of certiorari in the matter of The People of the State of California versus Jefferson Poland (a case in which a Justice and Appellate Court denied that American citizens have the right to distribute informational material in or about a bracero camp).

...an analysis of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights in terms of the current status of agricultural workers in the United States.

...statements by agricultural workers on the discrimination they have encountered in jobs, housing, medical care, and other fields.

This issue will be in the mails as soon after January 1 as we can manage it.

The February issue -- i.e., Volume I, Number 4 -- will be devoted largely to descriptions and discussions of several approaches to rural community organization in the Southwest. Henry Munoz, leader of the Crystal City, Texas, movement has promised us an article. We plan to have articles either by or about Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers Association; the American Friends Service Committee farm labor project in Tulare County; John Soria and the Farm Workers Service Center of Oxnard; and a representative of Peter Maurin House in Oakland.

These forthcoming issues, like all our issues, will include, in addition to lead articles, regular departments -- such as editorials and letters to the editor -- and special features, such as photographs, poetry, or reprints from the archives of the farm labor movement.

We are small.
We are weak.
We should help one another.
There is so much that has been done
wrong for us to undo; there is so much
that has been beautifully done for us
to try to do again...

Kenneth Patchen

